

B E L I N D A,

O R,

THE FAIR FUGITIVE.

A N O V E L.

By Mrs. C——

DEDICATED TO

HER GRACE THE DUCHESS OF MARLBOROUGH,

Hard is the fortune which the Fair attends.

LYTT.

A N E W E D I T I O N.

In T W O V O L U M E S.

V O L. II.

L O N D O N:

Printed for G. ALLEN, at his Circulating Library,
DUKE'S COURT, ST. MARTIN'S LANE.

M.DCC.LXXXIX.

B E L I N D A

THE NEW EDITION

OF THE



MARLBOROUGH

NEW EDITION

THE NEW EDITION OF THE

TEXT

A NEW EDITION

IN TWO VOLUMES

BY

L. O. M. D. N.

Printed for G. Allen, at the Old Printing Office,
Duke's Court, St. Martin's Lane.

1854

B E L I N D A,

OR

THE FAIR FUGITIVE.

CHAPTER IX.

MR. Mennill was no sooner left to himself than he began to consider where it was most probable his daughter could be. It must, he thought, be at her friend, Lady Sedley's, at least he determined to enquire there first. A servant was instantly dispatched to Windsor. He had so

little doubt of her being there that he felt only some degree of impatience for the messenger's return; but how was he shocked, surprised, and enraged, on finding when he did return that Sir James and Lady Sedley had set out for Scarborough some days ago. He was utterly confounded, nor knew what step he was next to take; all now depended on mere chance; he had no clue to guide him, not the most distant idea where to enquire next, nor was it by any means a pleasant undertaking to be thus in a manner compelled to expose both himself and his daughter. He was provoked

voked and enraged beyond all expression; and repeatedly vowed if ever he did discover the place of her retreat she should dearly repent her unpardonable conduct.

“ Yes, by heavens she shall!” cried he, as he walked up and down the room in the most violent agitation; “ all I regret is that my word is given to so fine a young fellow. She but ill deserves so enviable a fate; were it not that I have promised, that my honor is solemnly engaged, by all that’s good I would marry her to a cobbler who should soundly thrash her bones every day of her life.”

Day after day passed on, but no tidings could be heard of her. All their enquiries were fruitless; and in short they were obliged to give up the point, trusting that accident might, when they least expected it, do more for them than they had been able to do for themselves.

Near a month had now passed since the day on which Mr. Men-
nill flattered himself he should get quit of all his cares, by having his daughter well married. Edmond began to think it rather extraordinary that he heard nothing from either his father or brother about the affair as they
had

had promised he should; he felt a degree of impatience, mixed with a degree of hope of he knew not exactly what; he grew anxious to know how matters went on. The image of the lovely, but as he believed, the insensible Belinda, haunted his imagination without ceasing. "Perhaps," he would at some moments fancy, "she had after all refused Charles; 'tis most certain, I saw no symptoms of partiality for him in her behaviour. Yet had she not consented to be his—she had—yes, even before she saw him, her word was given. He sighed, and wished to drive her too charming

idea from his mind; he tried it, but tried in vain. Determined to know the truth as the only remedy for a passion his reason condemned, he had some thoughts of going once more to town; this he gave up—he would next write to Charles—no, he feared trusting his pen on the subject to him. At last, unable to conquer a curiosity for which he could not account to his own satisfaction, he resolved to write to a friend of his then in London, to whom he could do it, and make what enquiries he pleased without any scruple. They were pretty regular correspondents; indeed he was

at

at that very time wondering he had not lately heard from him. Next morning was set apart for this purpose; but before the day was at an end the following letter was brought him from that very friend.

EDWARD WHARTON, ESQ.

TO

EDMOND MAYNARD, ESQ.

I know you have for some time, Edmond, been *looking upon*, if not very civilly *calling* me a lazy idle fellow. Appearances I confess are rather against me: but you are not to learn, they are
not

not always to be trusted, so let that suffice at present: instead of a detail of the whys and wherefores, I have other matters to treat you with more to my taste and your's too I hope.

Pray has Charles, that pink of puppyism, yet sent you a summons to attend his nuptials?—in your last you told me you daily expected it. Lay aside those fruitless expectations, Edmond. Oh I have so joyous a tale to unfold, could I but hope to do it even common justice, as will serve you to laugh at every day of your life, were you to live to the age of Methusalem. The town is
ringing

ringing with it; but you have no doubt heard of it; you must; and I have of course lost the joy of making you die with laughing. However, upon a supposition that you may not, here goes.

The day of days was fixed—Miss, as the world says, had, during the whole course of the negotiation, been rather refractory or so; but that was got over: the day, as I was telling you, was fixed.

Charles and his father, dressed a *marvielle* no doubt, and *bien poudree*, stepped into their carriage elate with hope and all the other pleasant sensations an affair of this nature

nature must naturally give rise to, and drove to the temple of his divinity; two or three other friends were also invited to accompany the happy pair to church; his said divinity had not, it was conjectured, finished the labours of her toilet when the bridegroom arrived. He cast his wishing eyes around, but found not the object they were in search of.

Mr. Mennill saw, and felt for him; he rung the bell. "Let your young lady know," *quoth* he, "we are impatient for the favour of her company;" or words I presume to that effect.

They waited—again they waited

—no

—no Miss Mennill. Again the bell was rung; half a dozen male and female servants popped their heads into the room all at once looking like so many ghosts, pale, quaking, quivering, and almost speechless, with terror—their young lady was not to be found!

Edmond, my dear Edmond, can you, is it in nature to fancy a more joyous scene of confusion than that which followed this extraordinary intelligence. Do not flatter yourself with hopes that I mean to describe it; I know the extent of my talents rather better than that comes to.

“Not

“Not to be found!” exclaimed one.

“Not to be found?” screamed another.

“No, not to be found,” cried the croaking messengers; “we cannot open Miss Belinda’s room door, and therefore conclude some mischief has happened; indeed, indeed, Sir, please your honors, we fear she has made away with herself as the saying is.”

“Confound your ugly faces,” cried her father, “and is this all; and so because Miss Mennill chose to lock her door, you chose to give us this cursed alarm. Get out of my sight this moment,

or

or I'll make away with every soul of ye, as the saying is."

I will not swear, Edmond, this was exactly the dialogue that passed on the ever memorable occasion, but of course something like it.

In short, up they all flew, or hobbled, according to their abilities in point of speed; knocked, called, screamed—no answer;—stared—looked aghast on each other—made away with herself, as the saying is, occurred to them—horrid—yet not singular—rather so indeed for a young lady. The door was now forced open; the
bird

bird was flown, actually flown, Edmond; nor have they yet been able with all their wits to discover to what corner of this habitable globe she has taken her flight.

And so ends my story. I leave you to make your own comments on this delectable history, Edmond. I have laughed 'till I am weary—think of that first of all puppies, that brother of your's being the HERO upon such an occasion. How I enjoy the fellow's mortification, and adore the girl's spirit.

If I am not mistaken, I think you wrote me you had seen Belinda, and that she was handsome.

Suppose

Suppose you were to carry her off—what a triumph; but where to find her?—aye, there's the rub, Edmond. Do prithee leave your shady groves and purling streams, and come to town; I shall remain here a month longer at least; do come, and let us have a joyous laugh together about this ridiculous story.

I hear Charles does not give up the point—her father swears she shall yet be his in spite of men and devils. They forget the damsel is probably long before this time the lawful property of another; my life for it, she did not escape from one lover but to fly

fly to another more to her taste.
But come to town, and let us see
how the business will end—do
order your boots and set off.

Your's,

EDWARD WHARTON.

I leave my readers to imagine
what an effect this letter produced
in the mind of Edmond. He was
breathless with impatience to get
to the end of it, and when he
had done so, scarce knew a word
that was in it distinctly. Again he
read it, nor could even then cre-
dit his senses—a thousand hopes,
a thousand

a thousand fears by turns took possession of him. He knew his friend's lively imagination, and that he embellished every story he told by his facetious manner in relating it. Ignorant how deeply he was interested in it, he had probably exaggerated the circumstances, nay perhaps put such a finishing stroke to it, as he, in the gaiety of his heart, thought *it ought* to have had, instead of that it had in *reality*.

One moment he resolved to set off for London, and the next, saw it could answer no purpose, since the lovely Miss Mennill was not to be found there; he then
determined

determined to write to Wharton, entreating him to enquire minutely into the affair, and to learn the real state of the case; but above all whether it was generally believed she was gone off with another. This plan he thought most advisable, and instantly put it in execution.

TO EDWARD WHARTON, ESQ.

Your most astonishing letter, my dear Wharton, has raised such a tumult in my breast that I am more than half distracted—you will stare; and readily believe me by this beginning so very contrary
to

to what you no doubt expected. My ideas are in such a state of perplexity and confusion, that I find it impossible to explain myself so clearly as I wish.

Suffice it to say, that I love, I adore Miss Mennill—judge then what are my feelings at this moment. You are not deceived, Edward; I did write to you that she was handsome, but that was saying little.

On my going with my father and brother to pay my respects to her, as one whom they assured me was in a few days to be his wife, I found her not merely handsome—had that been her only perfection

perfection, never should I have envied his fate; but she is lovely beyond all power of expression; her form angelic; her voice, her manner—all, all formed to captivate the most insensible heart. I passed one whole day in her engaging company—what a day—what could I think—I knew it was the first on which she had seen Charles, this he had told me. Yet she had consented to be his. I had my father's, I had his word for it; what could I think, I say, but that charming as she appeared her heart was absolutely a stranger to every sentiment of delicacy; my reason condemned her; but my heart,

heart, my eyes, my every sense rebelled against its dictates, and I left her in a situation of mind more painful than my greatest enemy could have wished me; firmly persuaded she was to give her hand to my brother, I fled. I hoped absence and cool reflection would convince me she *could not*, with the sentiments I had such apparent reason to ascribe to her, be the amiable creature she appeared, and never sure did woman appear more enchantingly so than she did. I fled from the too charming object, Edward, in hopes to regain the peace I had so fatally lost. How I should have succeeded

succeeded I know not; but your letter gives me reason to believe the wound has been deeper than then I imagined; a gleam of hope has rekindled the flame I wished to smother; yet I will not swear I had even got so far as to *wish it*.

Thus you have, my dear Edward, in return for your history, that of my heart. Need I say more, or can you guess that I depend on you for a more particular account of this, to me, interesting revolution.

Make it your business, as you value my peace, to learn the truth, and let me instantly hear from you. 'Till then I leave you to
imagine

imagine the condition I shall be
in: a thousand hopes, *ten* thousand
fears, will by turns agitate the heart
of your

EDMOND MAYNARD.

CHAP.

CHAPTER X.

LEAVING Edmond to his own reflections, impatiently waiting for a second letter from his friend, let us now say a few words concerning his brother.

The disappointment he had met with was a severe blow on more accounts than one: Such was, however, the happy portion of vanity he possessed, that he was less mortified by it than any other man 'tis probable would have been;

been; for he very wisely set it down to the lady's want of taste and discernment; but tho' his vanity was not much hurt, his passions were—his passions I say, because his heart had no more feeling or sensibility than a flint; but he admired her person, and would have given all he was worth to possess it; yet there was a still greater cause for cursing his stars, as he perpetually did most heroically—this was the loss of her fortune—his finances were in a most deplorable state; over head and ears in debt. In spite of his father's blind partiality he had not courage to let him into the

true state of his affairs; one circumstance there was indeed he had scarcely courage even to think of it himself; but bad as it was, he flattered himself it would not rise up in judgment against him, till he by some fortunate stroke or other, found himself in a situation to settle it in such a manner that should give him no farther trouble. He had Mr. Mennill's promise that his lovely daughter should still be his could she but be found, and he looked upon it as a folly to suppose she would not sooner or later. With this flattering hope, day after day his own mind let him into the

went on, but no accounts could be obtained.

Charles was one evening strolling home, after having passed it with a party of his gay companions at a tavern, when as he walked on he observed two ill looking fellows attempting to rob a gentleman at the corner of the street he had just turned into. He instantly struck at one of them before he had time to see who gave the blow; it made him stagger; the other now saw him, and took to his heels, his companion following as fast as he could. The gentleman whom they had knocked down was not so much hurt as

Charles feared, yet had received a very severe blow on his temple. He got up and expressed his gratitude for the favour so kindly done him in his thus coming to his assistance, but found himself rather giddy by the blow. Charles offered him his arm; the gentleman thanked him, while accepting it, saying he had not fifty yards to go, and begged he would do him the favor to step into his house that he might have an opportunity not only more fully to express his gratitude, but also to know to whom he was so much obliged. In a few moments they reached the door; they both
went

went in; but imagine if you can, my fair reader, what was Charles's astonishment to find two ladies sitting engaged in chat, one of whom was no other than Miss Mennill. He started — Belinda turned pale as death, and exclaimed—"good heavens, what do I see? Mr. Maynard!"—and had nearly fainted, so unspeakable was her surprise on seeing the man of all others she least wished to see introduced by Sir James Sedley.

Her friend stood petrified with astonishment in hearing Miss Mennill name him, nor was Sir James less so. All the precautions they

had hitherto taken to prevent her being discovered were in a moment rendered abortive by this unlucky accident; for some moments they all stood silent, unable to express the various emotions this strange event had produced; the ladies eagerly gazing on Sir James, expecting an explanation, since it was impossible *they* could guess that mere chance was alone to blame for what had unfortunately happened.

At last Charles, who certainly had least reason to be *disconcerted*, however surprised, cried—"was ever man so blessed, thus to find, when least expected, the lovely
object,

object, whose cruel flight has rendered me from that distracting moment the most wretched of human beings; ah do not, do not, my charming Miss Mennill, damp my present joy by those killing frowns, that forbidding coldness; did you but know what your adoring Charles has suffered you would not thus——”

“ I beg, Mr. Maynard,” cried Belinda, interrupting him, “ you will spare yourself the trouble of attempting to describe sufferings which I am pretty certain you neither *do*, nor are *capable* of feeling. Had you that tender regard for me, you ridiculously pre-

tend, would you, as you have done, thus have drawn on me a father's displeasure? no, Sir; a man of sentiment, a man of any delicacy, would scorn to owe the hand of the woman he *adored*, as you affect to call it, to parental authority only; how you have contrived to gain so great a share of *his* favor, you best know; but give me leave to assure you *mine* you *never can*."

"Cruel Miss Mennill," replied Charles, "thus to doubt the sincerity of a passion fervent as ever warmed the breast of man; your father's partiality does me honor; I glory in it, and should think I
but

but ill deserved the place you reproach me for having gained in his esteem and friendship, could I be weak enough to resign the invaluable treasure he encourages me to pursue, and which he has generously promised shall be mine."

"The *treasure* most dear to you, Mr. Maynard, he has my free consent to bestow upon you whenever he thinks proper," answered Belinda; "but you are most egregiously deceived if you fancy even the authority of a father shall have power to give you my hand with it."

Sir James finding there was no probability that an amicable end

would be put to this unexpected interview, now addressed himself to Charles, saying—"tho' chance, Mr. Maynard, has laid me under an obligation to you, and tho' no person can be more sensible of it than I acknowledge myself to be, yet I must take the liberty to remind you that it grows late," looking at his watch. "Miss Mennill is flurried—her health may suffer—you now, Sir, know where to find her at a proper hour."

He rung the bell. A servant appeared.

"Would you have a chair called, Mr. Maynard? I would offer you
my

my carriage, but fear it will detain you too long before it can be got ready."

Charles bowed his thanks and declined accepting either. Again he made an attempt to soften the heart of his lovely mistress; but finding it in vain, was compelled to take his leave, fully determined to go instantly and acquaint her father with this joyful discovery. He flew to Portland Place; but how was he mortified when informed Mr. Mennill was not yet come home; did they know where he was to be found? he asked—they did not, was the answer. He was half out of his wits at this

this unlucky accident. He next went to the coffee house he generally used, with no better success. The fact was, Mr. Mennill was gone to dine with a friend at Blackheath very unexpectedly, and did not return till the following evening; Charles in the mean time running in search of him from one end of the town to the other till day light.

While he was thus employed, Miss Mennill and her friends held a hasty consultation what steps they were next to take. She found by Mr. Maynard's conversation, he was still encouraged by

by her father, and in no humour to give her up: to return home then would be to run into certain misery, and to remain where she was would come to the same thing, since her father would of course force her to do so the moment he knew where she was. To prevent this there was not an instant to be lost—it was now past twelve o'clock.

“Order the post chaise,” cried Lady Sedley, after a pause of a few minutes; “my dear Sir James, ’tis a fine moon light night; I will, as soon as it can possibly be got ready, convey the dear girl to Oakhill Farm, tis not thirty miles from

from London, we may reach it in a few hours. I can depend upon my old friends there; they will be proud and happy to render every thing agreeable to her. Their daughter is a good creature, and will play the part of an Abigail mighty well. I can be back here by dinner to-morrow, and have an hour or two's rest into the bargain; when I return, you and I, my dear Sir James, will consider what reception we are to give to those who come in quest of the fair fugitive."

The post chaise and four was that moment ordered; yet Sir James, tho' he approved of the plan
upon

upon the whole, was fearful lest some accident should happen to them on the road, and fifty other fears; he wished to be their conductor himself, rather than trust them alone; but gave up the point at their united entreaties, as they assured him there could be no danger; a highwayman was all they had to apprehend, and for this they would make up their minds as well as purses. In fine, after putting up a few necessary articles, away they drove, and were actually on the turnpike road in less than an hour after the plan was formed.

They arrived at Farmer Thom-
son's

son's about fix o'clock in the morning. Great, it may be imagined, was the surprize of the good folks to receive such early and such unexpected guests. An excellent breakfast was got ready with all expedition. This revived them. Lady Sedley, in a few words, gave the necessary orders in regard to her young friend, and after taking an hour's rest tenderly embraced her early charge, bidding her adieu, and promising to write every particular of what might happen on her return, got into her carriage, and was in Wimpole Street by one o'clock. She had the precaution however

to quit it at some distance from her house, taking a chair, to prevent as far as possible the observation of her neighbours.

Thus was the important point got over without any accident or loss of time. Lady Sedley was in high spirits with her success, and enjoyed the thoughts of the disappointment she had prepared for the unfortunate lover.

“Have we not managed this business most delightfully, my dear Sir James?” said her ladyship.

“Indeed you have, my love,” replied he; “but to tell you the truth, I fear the most puzzling part of it yet remains: pray what
are

are we to say to her father and his intended son?"

"I vow I do not exactly know *that*," replied Lady Sedley, " 'tis rather an awkward piece of business I must confess."

She paused a moment; at last cried—"will you, my dear Sir James, leave that wholly to me; a thought has just struck me—'tis ridiculous I grant; but never mind that, so is Mr. Mennill's whole proceeding."

"Most willingly," answered Sir James, "I have no desire to undertake it I do assure you."

"Oh but you must play your part too in the farce," replied she;

she; "one performer will never do."

"Well, and what character am I to support pray?" cried Sir James, smiling.

"Why only this," said her ladyship: "when the parties concerned arrive, receive Mr. Mennill with your usual civility as if nothing had happened. Should Charles be with him, bow to him as a person you never till that moment set eyes on; appear astonished at any enquiries they make concerning Miss Mennill, and leave the rest to me; I am sensible I shall be compelled to tell a few *fib*s, but it shall be as few

as

as possible. This is my plot, and tho' I may not *firmly* persuade Mr. Mennill that the story Charles has told him is absolutely a *dream*, he shall at least be so puzzled and confounded as not to know positively whether it is or not."

Sir James laughed heartily at the drollery of her scheme, feared she would not be able to keep it up; but promised to second her to the best of his power. He was just going to take his hat in order to go out.

"Heavens!" cried her ladyship, "what are you going to do? you forget the farce may for ought we know be on the point

point of beginning. Depend upon it they will be here in a few minutes. My wonder is they have not arrived long 'ere now."

He resumed his seat. Her ladyship sat down to her tambour, endeavouring to acquire courage and composure for the scene she had to go through. Why the gentlemen were so late, my reader knows already I presume. Mr. Mennill had been at Blackheath. Charles's impatience for his return home may easily be conceived: fifty times was he, as soon as the morning dawn'd, on the point of going to Wimpole street, but as often considered his going alone
could

could answer no purpose. He sent a servant however to watch the door: alas! he was many hours too late for making any discovery; all was peace and quietness there.

At last Mr. Mennill arrived at his house, where the restless and almost sleepless Charles not only astonished but highly delighted him with the important intelligence he had to communicate. The old gentleman now cursed Blackheath and all it's inhabitants, but consoled himself with the thought that he should of course find the runaway at Sir James's, since he with reason concluded their attempting to conceal her *now* could answer

no purpose after she had been seen there. The carriage not having been dismissed, they now both entered it, and with no small emotion drove to Sir Charles Sedley's. But however violent their's might be, Lady Sedley's was infinitely more so when she heard their rap and saw them enter into the house.

"How do you do, my good friend?" said Sir James, cordially taking his hand, and at the same time making a polite bow to Charles; "I trust you bring Lady Sedley and myself some pleasing intelligence: have you heard any thing of her young friend?"

"Heyday!"

“Heyday!” cried the astonished father, looking first on one and then on the other; “what the devil does all this mean?”

“Mean, my dear Sir,” said her ladyship; “did you then suppose we were ignorant of the unfortunate affair that has given you so much trouble and uneasiness?”

“No by the Lord I suppose no such thing, because I have pretty good reason to suppose to the contrary.” And while saying this he cast an inquisitive glance to every corner of the room.

“I fear, Mr. Mennill,” replied Lady Sedley, “by the manner

in

in which you express yourself, my dear sir, you have thought us negligent in not sending more frequent enquiries; but the truth is we thought it could answer no end except giving you trouble; well assured you would kindly inform us when you had any news likely to give us pleasure, and such I confess I hoped was your motive for this visit."

"All this is Greek and Hebrew to me, by all that's good!" cried he rising, with looks of amazement: "Sir James, is your lady in her right senses?—are you? am I? Charles," continued he, "what say you to all this? can
VOL. II. D you

you make head or tail of it, for curse me if I can."

"Fore gad," cried Charles, "'tis as complete a *bore* as ever I had the honor to meet with. All I have to say is that I had the felicity last night, very unexpectedly indeed, to pay my devoirs to your charming daughter in this very house, nay in this very room, if I am not egregiously mistaken."

"Sir," cried Lady Sedley, as if she had not comprehended him, "pray may I beg you to repeat what you was so good as to say, for I fear I did not clearly understand you?"

"The devil you did not!" cried

Mr. Men-

Mr. Mennill; "I am sorry to say I fancy your ladyship's intellects are not very clear this morning."

"Indeed I believe you are right," replied she; "for to tell you the truth I was a sad rake last night. We dined with a large party; from thence went to Ranelagh; and did not return home 'till I am almost ashamed to say how late this morning. People go to public places now at such ridiculous hours there's no enduring it."

Sir James found it nearly impossible to keep his gravity; Charles stood staring with his eyes on the

full stretch, as if trying to discover whether he was or was not awake.

“ Look ye, Sir James,” cried Mr. Mennill, “ all this may, for aught I know to the contrary, be very clever, very witty, and all that, but as I have other business at present, I will take it as a favor if you will be kind enough either to call my daughter down or let me step up and fetch her.”

“ Nay Mr. Mennill,” cried Lady Sedley, affecting to smile, “ I shall be tempted to believe, if you carry this joke much farther, that you too, my good friend, have been raking last night as well as ourselves.”

“ What?

“What? my daughter, Belinda Mennill,” answered he with an emphasis, “is not in this house then you would persuade me, would you?”

“Upon my word,” said Sir James, “I should suppose it would require no extraordinary share of eloquence to do that.”

“What she is not here then, hey?”

“No, upon my honor!”

“Charles,” cried he turning to him, “pray do me the favor to tell me what I am to think of all this?”

“By all that’s whimsical,” replied he, with looks of amazement,

ment, "'tis the most unaccountable affair I ever had the honor to be engaged in. I can only repeat that I was happy enough to do that gentleman"—bowing to Sir James—"a trifling piece of service last night, that he in return very politely asked me into his house; that *in his* house to my unspeakable joy and surprise, I saw, and conversed for some time with Miss Mennill."

"Pray," said Lady Sedley, interrupting him, "of what nature was the service you mention?"

"I mean not to boast of it, madam," replied he: "I found Sir James likely to be robbed by

two

two ill looking rascals, and had the good fortune I believe to prevent it."

"Oh now I trust we shall come to a right understanding," said Lady Sedley. "My dear," added she, turning to Sir James, "this young gentleman is pretty *nearly* right, *tho' not quite.*"

"I begin to understand the matter perfectly," answered he. Then turning to Charles—"the mistake you are under, Sir, is now easily explained; you have in the first place only taken one door for another; Sir James Selby, who lives in the very next house, was, our servants inform us, at-

tacked last night while we were out; and I think, my dear, they also mentioned the assistance he so fortunately met with from a stranger."

"So my daughter, it *would appear*, has all this time been your next door neighbour," cried Mr. Mennill, "and I am to believe you knew nothing at all of the matter."

"And *I*," said Charles, interrupting him, "am to believe I never till now set eyes upon *that* lady and *that gentleman*; the resemblance between the Selby's, I think you call them, and yourselves must be uncommonly striking indeed,

indeed, or I must be horridly blind that could mistake one for the other. Please heaven, I will this moment go and have a second peep at my new friends; if I go on at this rate I shall make a pretty considerable addition to the number of my acquaintance. Be comforted, my dear Sir," speaking to Mr. Mennill, "our troubles must I think be very near at an end since we have got within a door of the dear creature."—And he was taking his hat for that purpose.

"I am sorry to inform you the family set off early this morning for Scarborough," said Sir

D 5

James

James Sedley, "so that you cannot, so soon as you wish, improve the intimacy with them so happily commenced."

"Oh damn Scarborough," cried Mr. Mennill, out of all patience, "you too we heard some time ago were gone for that place; but perhaps you were *then* also *taken for them*."

"Why no," replied Lady Sedley, smiling, "I fancy not, as we were there about a month or six weeks since; but had we not, I should not be in the least surprised at your having heard it, for a thousand things are reported in this good town of ours which
have

have no foundation; but if, as this young gentleman affirms, he really saw and spoke to my lovely young friend there last night, I confess I am rather surprised you were so late this morning in making farther enquiry, tho' as it unluckily happens you could not very well have called before the hour they set out; indeed if Miss Mennill actually was with them, which forgive me, Sir, if I can hardly yet give credit to, 'tis more than probable they hurried out of town on purpose to avoid them."

"Why that," said Mr. Mennill, "is, as your ladyship observes, likely enough; as to the reason

reason of my being so late, the truth is I knew nothing of the matter till within this hour; I happened to be out of town. But who the devil are these Selby's? I never heard the girl mention them, yet they must be on a pretty intimate footing or they would not take the trouble of gallopping up and down the country in this manner to please her cursed whims and fancies, and encourage her in her disobedience."

"Upon my word," said her ladyship, "I have not the pleasure of their acquaintance, nor did I ever, as you observe, Sir, hear Miss Mennill mention them; which makes me, I confess, still inclined

to think there must be some mistake."

"Oh pardon me there," cried Charles, "if I am compelled to discredit my eye sight in regard to your ladyship and Sir James; the universe combined shall never persuade me I did not both see and talk to the cruel Belinda."

"Well, tis a confounded piece of business altogether," said Mr. Mennill, "as ever I met with, from beginning to end; however, Charles, since we have got scent of the huffey, we'll even pursue it; I'll be cursed if she escapes me now; and by my soul these
Selby's

Selby's shall pay dear for giving me such a jaunt."

"You mean then to follow them?" said Sir James.

"Follow them," replied the other, "to be sure I do; but don't mistake me—not for love of the girl believe me; no, no, she has effectually done for herself in that particular; but since my friend Charles here has not got the better of his love, as I have of mine, and still wishes to have her, by heavens he shall, were it only that I may break her heart; for I find she has thought proper to engage her affections elsewhere without taking the trouble to consult

sult her father upon the occasion."

So saying, to the unspeakable satisfaction of Lady Sedley, they took their leave. Charles, as he walked to the door casting a doubtful eye around him, as much as to say, "if this is not the identical house I was in last night, I shall not wonder if hereafter I forget my own name, or when looking in my glass take myself for somebody else."

CHAP.

CHAPTER XI.

THEY now proceeded to Sir John Maynard's, to whom they related the blundering story, informing him of their resolution to set off next morning to Scarborough, wishing he would make one of the party. This however Sir John declined, saying three could not conveniently travel in one post chaise, and either of them going in another alone would be rather a dull piece of business.

Next

Next morning then the father and hopeful son elect set off without a doubt of success, in pursuit of the fair fugitive; and Lady Sedley, being pretty well recovered from the fatigues of the past day, as soon as breakfast was over sat down to give Belinda an account of all that had happened since they parted.

Her ladyship's letter, though full of humour and vivacity, yet contained in substance merely what we are already acquainted with, so 'tis not necessary to insert it. It found Miss Mennill as comfortably settled as could well be expected, surrounded as she was by
strangers

strangers only. The family consisted of farmer Thompson, his wife, and one daughter. Mrs. Thompson had formerly lived with Lady Sedley's mother, and was a very worthy, sensible woman; Fanny was a fine blooming girl, about twenty, to whom her father, she being an only child, could give three or four hundred pounds on the day of her marriage, happen when it would, without leaving himself and wife penniless.

Their attention to every wish of Miss Mennill was unremitted. Why they were thus honored with her company they knew not, and had too much good sense to enquire.

quire. It was enough to know Lady Sedley had herself brought her there, and given them the strictest charges to pay her every possible respect as *her* most intimate friend. This they soon found would be a most pleasant task. Fanny was from the day of her arrival taken from all other work, that she might attend wholly upon her young lady, as she now called her.

That Belinda's mind was by no means at ease, is most certain: She lamented that her father's ideas of what would make her happy should unfortunately differ so widely from her own. She was shocked
to

to find by what Mr. Maynard said at their unexpected meeting, that he continued in the same way of thinking. While he did so she could not bring herself to think of returning home, and therefore endeavoured to reconcile herself to her present situation till things should take a more favourable turn. Indeed there could hardly be a more pleasant situation; the house was better than she had formed an idea of; and the country, as far as she could see around it, appeared particularly fine. Fanny too had assured her it was so, and moreover that at about half a mile distance there
was

was a gentleman's feat, which was reckoned one of the most beautiful places in the county. "The gardens," continued the communicative Fanny, are quite delightful: I am sure, madam, you will be no less so to walk there now and then; and I am well acquainted with the head gardener, who often calls here, and sometimes brings my mother and me a nosegay: he will be proud to shew them to you at any time I am sure."

Miss Mennill thanked her for the intelligence; and as she was fond of walking, agreed to go the first fine morning. In the mean time Lady Sedley's account
of

of her interview with her father and lover diverted her highly, except that she felt rather hurt at his being sent on such a wild goose chase to Scarborough. This she at first could not entirely approve of, yet on mature reflection hoped the journey and change of air might be of service to him, as he took too little exercise in general for his health.

She had not long to wait for a fine day; the very next was uncommonly so; and Fanny did not forget, when she carried up her breakfast to remind her of her intended walk. She readily undertook it, accompanied by her
delighted

delighted guide, who innocently took every means in her power to make the place appear to the greatest advantage, by exaggerating the beauties of that delightful spot. However upon the whole, her little excursion far exceeded her expectations, for she had not followed the gardener through half the pleasant windings and turnings of his little paradise, as he called it, before, turning hastily round to Belinda, he cried—"as I live, there is my master—I am certain he will be highly pleased to pay his compliments to so lovely a lady. With your leave, I will

I will just step on a little, and tell him you are here."

"Oh by no means," answered Miss Mennill, "tis quite needless to give him that trouble."—But John was off, and in a moment returned, accompanied by—Edmond Maynard. He stopped on seeing her, and gazed, unable to believe his senses; but at last convinced they did not deceive him, exclaimed with joy sparkling in his fine eyes as he spoke—"Miss Mennill! is it possible?"

While Belinda, no less astonished than himself, cried—"good heavens! Mr. Maynard, is it you?"

"It

“It is, it is the happy, the thrice happy Edmond, my lovely Belinda!” replied he, in raptures.

“Oh that my meeting you thus unexpectedly *here* may be a fortunate omen; surely, surely it must; heaven has at last heard my prayers, and sent the dear object of my tenderest affections to complete my felicity.”

Belinda's amazement at finding *him* the master of this delightful spot now gave place to that of hearing from him a language so little expected. She was unable to speak; her surprise, and let me add, her joy, put it absolutely out of her power to articulate

one syllable. Her intelligent eyes indeed might, had he not been lost in so sweet a confusion, have told him, however unexpected, it was by no means unpleasant.

He now tenderly taking her unreluctant hand, added—"Can you pardon me, Miss Mennill—can you forgive this too hasty discovery of my sentiments? I condemn myself—I see the impropriety of my behaviour; but to meet you thus, to meet you *here*, when I believed——"

"And what did you then believe?" said Belinda, walking gently on, that the attendants might no longer be witnesses to a
scene

scene she found too interesting to her heart; "tell me, Mr. Maynard, what did you believe?"

Edmond, who had in order to support his lovely companion, put her arm gently under his own, looking tenderly upon her, answered—"Oh, Belinda—Oh, Miss Mennill!" checking the familiarity of his first address; "what had I not to apprehend when I saw you last."

"*First* you might have said with equal propriety," cried she, smiling; "for if I forget not, Mr. Maynard, *this* is but our second time of meeting, yet you would I find——"

“ I understand you,” said Edmond; “ ’tis true, I saw you but once; but however I may be to blame in having in this unguarded manner declared the impression your incomparable charms that day made upon my heart, or however improbable your amiable modesty may lead you to believe *one* interview could make so indelible an impression, it is *infinitely* less strange than true; but tell me, my lovely Belinda; (will you pardon me,” continued he, “ for daring to address you by that tender appellation;)—tell me, I earnestly intreat you, by what happy, what unaccountable means
does

does it happen, that I am thus blessed with a sight of you here; here, where of all places on earth I should least have presumed to hope for so great, so unspeakable a felicity. Where is my brother, where———”

“ Oh heaven above knows,” cried Miss Mennill, “ where he is; far on his way to Scarborough by this time I believe.”

“ To Scarborough!” exclaimed Edmond; “ has he then at last resigned his presumptuous hopes?”

“ Oh fie, Mr. Maynard,” said she, smiling; “ would you, after all the fine things you have been saying, now spoil all by making

me so wretched a compliment as to suppose me forsaken."

Edmond, charmed with her amiable vivacity, could not resist pressing her hand to his heart as she hung on his arm, a more pleasing proof of his approbation to the heart of the happy Belinda than any words could possibly have been.

"So far from being forsaken," continued she in the same agreeable manner, "the poor soul is at this precious moment posting there in search of his lost Dulcinea, who might to be sure, had she been so inclined, have informed him he would have his labour

labour for his pains, as you, his brother, can now testify."

"Yes," cried the transported Edmond, "and I fervently thank heaven that I can! Oh, Miss Men-
nill——"

"Nay," cried she, "I thought you had just now got leave to cry *Oh Belinda!*"

"Have I then your leave to call you by that dear name," replied he, tenderly gazing on her; "go one step—one little step farther, and sweetly tell me I have leave to call you *my Belinda.*"

"Nay, *that* is quite another matter," replied she; "*my* makes

a most wonderful difference; we will reserve that favour for our *third* meeting if ever it should happen; we have I think done tolerably well for the *second*."

"If my Belinda——"

"So, so," cried she, interrupting him, "in case it should not happen, I find you are resolved to make sure of the present; but pray observe tis without my permission——"

Just as she uttered this, they found themselves at the entrance of an elegant summer house, placed on the banks of a clear rivulet which meandered through the

the grove they were now in. He led her towards it.

“ It grows late,” said Belinda, looking at her watch. Edmond sighed. “ You are a strange, unthinking being,” continued she, “ or more void of curiosity than any mortal I ever met with. Here have we been chatting this hour and half, and you have not yet asked me whereabouts in this neighbourhood the castle I inhabit is situated. But as I think, if I mistake not, you have called me angelic and so forth, you conjecture I have dropped from the clouds merely to pay you a visit in this your Paradise.”

Again he pressed her hand to

his heart, intreating she would step in for a few moments, lest she should find herself fatigued, and there gratify his curiosity.

This however she declined; but said if *he* was not fatigued he might walk with her towards her villa, and she would endeavour to oblige him.

With rapture he obeyed; and before they reached Mr. Thompson's (where he guessed she came from, by her attendant Fanny, though how, or why she came there he could not possibly conceive,) Belinda had given him a brief account of all that had passed since she first saw him at her father's house, except

cept what had passed in her heart: but even of this he began to flatter himself he was not quite so ignorant as before this happy meeting. Being well acquainted at the farm, he lingered in hopes Belinda would have asked him in. Whether inclined to do so is uncertain; she did not however; and Edmond, more in love than ever man was, after intreating permission to call upon her the next morning to enquire after her health, with reluctance, and a most expressive sigh when obliged to resign the soft hand he had so long had possession of, he took his leave, and bid her a solitary adieu.

Fanny

Fanny and her friend John had been nearly as much surpris'd at what they had seen as either of the lovers. They too had formed a variety of conjectures, but unfortunately they had no means to come to any degree of certainty. " 'Twas strange!—'twas wondrous strange!" and there they were obliged to rest. They hoped however a short time, and their honest endeavours, would clear up the mystery.

Miss Mennill had no sooner rested herself after her delightful walk, than taking up her pen, she gave a particular account of the events of the day to her friend

Lady

Lady Sedley, in which the amiable Edmond made the principal figure. Never had she sat down to write with so much heart-felt pleasure, for never till now was she mistress of a subject so infinitely dear to it. The farm from that moment appeared to her as the most favoured spot on earth. She every hour found new beauties in every tree, in every shrub. The birds seemed to sing with unusual sweetness; every thing around her wore the face of sweet content and tranquillity; she herself had to her kind hosts appeared even before this happy day more of the angel than a mere mortal like

like themselves, but now, the engaging smiles that played about the loveliest mouth in the world, and the charming vivacity that appeared in all she said and did, now tempted them to suspect she was not.

Leaving her thus employed, let us now enquire how the two gentlemen made out their journey to Scarborough. On the third day after their leaving London, they arrived at that place of gaiety and dissipation in perfect health, but in no disposition to partake of the amusements going forward at that place. Charles indeed would have entered into them all most gladly,

gladly, but feared his old friend might, were he to indulge his inclination, suspect the fervor of his passion for the object of their search.

CHAP-

C H A P T E R X I I .

THEY were no sooner seated in a comfortable room at the house they put up, than calling for the master of it, they began to ask the names of the families now in town. The landlord, scratching his head to help his memory, gave them a list of all he could recollect—Selby however was not of the number. Mr. Mennill now asked him if there was not a family of that
name

name there at present. Mr. Boniface again applied his hand to his head, then stroaked his chin, looking up to the ceiling in profound thought, as if seeking for information from thence.

At last—"Selby?—Selby? did your honour say," cried he; "no, no, there certainly is not."—Then another pause—"Selby?—oh I have it—your honor must pardon me, we have so many people coming and going every day, that 'tis hard to say who is or who is not here; but I have it now—Squire Selby's family, or a name so like it that I think that is it, left this place yesterday, not finding lodgings

ings to their minds, and are gone to Harrowgate."

"The devil they are," cried Mr. Mennill. "They had a young lady with them, had they not?"

"Yes, please your honor," replied the landlord, "I rather think they had."

"I wish to the Lord old Nick had them altogether," cried Mr. Mennill.

"Your honor is pleased to be merry," said the master of the inn, judging *that* the civillest thing he could say in answer to the above.

"Oh yes, I am cursedly inclined to be merry, as you very sagaciously

flagaciouſly obſerve. Get me a chicken for my ſupper as faſt as you can; d'ye hear me, ſee that I have a well aired bed, and let my carriage be at the door by eight in the morning—merry indeed!”

“ Yes, your honor,” replied the honeſt landlord, bowing; “ your honor will I hope take ſomething before you ſet out; the mornings get cold apace now, and an empty ſtomach is as bad as an empty purſe, as my wife ſays—they generally travel together.”

“ You may tell her from me,” answered Mr. Mennill, “ that you
and

and she are the fittest company for each other."

"True, your honor, very true as I'm a finner; then I'll order a doctor for the morning, shall I, your honor? 'twill be comfortable."

"Oh damn your doctors," cried Mr. Mennill, unfortunately mistaking a certain composition of the landlord's own manufacturing for one of the faculty; "do I look as if I came here to consult their large wigs? shew me one of the whole fraternity who at my age can shew such a stock of health, or travel at the rate I have done for the last three days."

"Aye bless your worship! as
you

you say I might look long enough before I found one," replied mine host. Gladly would he have set his honor right in regard to the doctor; but prudently held his tongue, lest, as he appeared rather touchy, he should take it in his head to be angry at having his ignorance thus discovered tho' in so trifling a matter. He retired therefore to order the chicken and a few other articles, merely that the bill next morning might look better in the face, as Corporal Trim, of worthy memory, would have said.

Charles, during this dialogue, had been walking about the room,
looking

looking at the prints it was decorated with, reading the rules to be observed at the assembly which hung framed and glazed over the chimney, and several other things equally entertaining, at the same time humming a favorite air in the last new opera; finding it come to a conclusion, he now took a chair and made an attempt to reconcile his travelling companion to the disappointment they had met with, observing they might with ease reach Harrowgate by dinner next day. In answer to this consolatory remark he got only a dry—"I suppose so:" this was no great encouragement to
proceed:

proceed: however he tried it again with no better success, and was once or twice tempted to wish himself quietly in London with his more lively companions, and to leave the old gentleman to follow his daughter's footsteps at his leisure; certain it is the journey had greatly lessened the attachment he had before felt for Belinda, for to his utter amazement he no longer felt the wound he fancied Miss Mennill's charms had made in his heart, so painful as it was when he first received it; but then the *thirty thousand pounds down*, his passion for that he found if possible greater than

than ever, having had time during his journey to make some unpleasant reflections on the lightness of his purse, and the difficulty of filling it by any other means. Since Mr. Mennill therefore chose to take so much trouble in order to accomplish his purpose; he thought, however the violence of his passion for her person might be evaporated during the bustle, the wisest thing he could do was to second his endeavours to the utmost of his power. To bed then they both went, after a - no very chearful supper, and by eight next morning found themselves driving full speed

speed to Harrowgate; at which place in due time they arrived; and putting up at the Green Dragon, enquired if a family of the name of Selby were there, or to their knowledge at any of the other houses.

There they were not, nor had they heard of any such, tho' they might be nevertheless at the Marquis of Granby, the Queen's Head, or some other of the inns.

Charles undertook to set off in search of them; while his weary companion ordered dinner. Glad was he even of this little dissipation; he went to all the public rooms, met with two or three

of his acquaintance, told them of his being turned knight errant, and enquired of every soul he met for those confounded Selby's, as he with some reason called them. All in vain—no such name could he hear of.

At last one of the waiters said, a Mr. Headly's family had that morning set off for York, in order to be at the races; it sounded like it, if his honor was not *quite* certain that Sedley *was* the name, it might possibly be the other."

"It may," cried he, "for as to being certain, I certainly am not; Sedley, Headly," repeated Charles; "curse me if I now know which

is which, 'tis such a confounded piece of business, such a jumble of confusion. I suppose it must after all be Headly. You are sure," continued he, "they are to make some stay at York?"

"So the servants told me," replied the waiter.

"Had they a young lady with them?" cried Charles.

"Yes, Sir," answered the fellow, "they had two, and one of them was reckoned handsome, and a large fortune."

"Oh it must be so; you are undoubtedly right," said Charles, again repeating Sedley, Headly, so often that he totally forgot

that Selby was in fact the name he set off with.

He found Mr. Mennill on his return at the Green Dragon considerably more in temper than when he left him; he had drank pretty near a bottle of excellent claret, which had produced a very agreeable effect on his spirits, to which the information Charles now brought added not a little, since they looked upon their trouble and fatigue as pretty near over as he was assured they were to make some stay at York. As to the jumble of names, the more they talked the matter over, the more they were convinced that
it

it must be Headly, as that was clearly more like Sedley than Selby.

Their next day's journey was but a step; no need therefore to rise early on that account. However so great was Mr. Mennill's impatience to get his daughter once again into his own hands, that he was in his carriage by ten next morning, and by two at Bluit's inn, in York.

"Is Mr. Headly's family here?" cried he as the waiter led him to a room.

"Yes, please your honor," answered he.

Mr. Mennill, turning his head

to Charles, giving him a significant wink, cried, " we are right at last, my boy, thank heaven;" and in they went in high spirits.

" Send your master here," continued he.

" Yes, your honor," replied the waiter, and disappeared instantly. Mr. Bluit soon after entered the room to know his worship's pleasure.

He now ordered his dinner, and then said, " so I find Mr. Headly and his family are here, Mr. Bluit."

" Yes, Sir," replied he, " they arrived yesterday."

" Aye," replied the delighted Mr.

Mr. Mennill, "so I heard at Harrowgate; be so good as to step with my compliments, and tell him I shall be glad to wait upon him for a few moments."

"Alas, Sir," answered Bluit, "I fear the poor gentleman is in no humour to receive company, he is in a sad taking at present."

"Why what's the matter?" said Mr. Mennill.

"Matter enough," replied the other. "A young lady who came here with him, and to whom he is either guardian or a relation I suppose, for I do not find she is his daughter, ran off this

morning before day light with a young fellow to Scotland."

"The devil she did," cried Mr. Mennill and Charles both in a breath, with looks of confusion, rage, and disappointment. "I wish with all my soul every female in the kingdom was at the bottom of the sea. Guardian indeed—by heavens I have a great mind to go and blow the rascal's brains out."

Charles, thinking this would answer no purpose in regard to himself, now endeavoured to pacify him, begging he would not lose an instant, since they were now in so fair a way of finding her,

her; but set off that moment in pursuit of the happy pair whom they might easily overtake he made no doubt, and it would be time enough to blow the old gentleman's brains out when they came back.

"Get my carriage this moment," cried the now exasperated father, "let me have four of the best horses in your stables. By all that's good if I do overtake them, I will effectually cool their passions. Make haste, fly; do you hear Sir; say nothing of all this to her guardian, as you call him, untill I come back; I have not done with him yet. If you

blab, depend upon it you'll lose a customer, for he'll hardly wait till I return.

Away ran Bluit unable to conjecture what all this could mean. While the horses were putting to our two travellers eat a Sandwich, drank a glass of wine, and in a state of mind more easily imagined than described, set off as fast as four stout horses could carry them.

At the fourth stage they asked if they had a couple there on their road to Gretna Green (as you may be sure they had done at them all.) The landlord, guessing at once by the smoking condition

dition of their horses that they meant to stop the journey of the lovers, putting his finger slyly to his lips and pointing to a particular room with an expressive look, nodded his assent to the question, leading them quietly in to one adjoining to that in which the lovers were. All this caution was highly necessary on the part of the sagacious landlord; but his two guests were in no humour to be very ceremonious; without waiting therefore for his introduction, in they both bounced to the great terror of the poor trembling lovers; who hearing the rattling of their carriage had given themselves

themselves over for lost, not doubting but they were pursued. But judge what astonishment filled the whole group when they saw each other. The young lady's fears indeed on seeing a pair of strangers, were considerably lessened; but not so soon Mr. Mennill's rage; for as she had drawn back to the darkest corner of the apartment, he sprung forwards, drawing her from it by the shoulders, and calling her by no very tender names. But in a moment perceiving his mistake, he let her go, and exclaimed—"why who, in the devil's name, are you?"

"And pray gentlemen who the devil

devil are you?" cried the now re-assured lover, stepping briskly up to them, "that thus presume to intrude upon our privacy?"

"Who," replied Mr. Mennill in the greatest consternation; "I will not undertake to ascertain even that or any thing else, again as long as I live. I beg your pardon—let that suffice. Take my word for it *I* have more reason to be angry than you have; but that's no affair of your's."

So saying, he bounced out of the room with as little ceremony as he had bounced into it, cursing every thing that fell in his way, not forgetting poor Belinda, whom
he

he now gave up, swearing he had finally done with her, and she might go to the devil her own way; and getting into his carriage, the poor mortified Charles *unbidden* took his seat by him, and they set off on their return for London. A most uncomfortable pair of companions they now proved to each other as ever travelled: the latter wishing with all his soul he had never set eyes on either the [father or daughter, and looking upon the whole from beginning to end as a most compleat *bore*; the former repeatedly swearing women were formed for no earthly purpose but to plague every mortal

tal

tal who had any thing to do with them. I am not sure whether he did not in his own mind swear to turn even Willson out of doors the moment he got home. Home he did get to at last: but there was a certain insinuating something in that damsel's countenance which the moment she flew to welcome his honor's safe return put that cruel purpose quite out of his head. Charles immediately took his leave, not much delighted with the thoughts of giving Sir John the particulars of their sentimental journey.

CHAP.

C H A P T E R X I I I .

AS soon as Mr. Mennill had by Willson's care and attention recovered some degree of temper, she told him that a young man had called two or three times during his absence, and that she had asked him if he had any message to leave; that he answered he had not, yet wished to speak to Mr. Mennill about very particular business, and would call again.

“ What

“What can the fellow want with me?” said Mr. Mennill.

“I can’t guess,” answered she, “but he seems very anxious to see your honor.”

“Well, let me know when he comes again.”

This he did in a few days, and was admitted.

“Well, friend,” said Mr. Mennill, “pray what is your pleasure with me?”

“Please your honor, replied the man, I am come to tell you I can inform you where Miss Mennill is.”

“You inform me,” cried her father. “Are you sure, young man of what you say?”

“Perfectly

“Perfectly sure Sir,” answered he, “for I was the postillion who drove her out of town.”

“The devil you was! and how then have you the impudence to see my face? who are you? who employed you? was she accompanied by a lover?”

“No, please your honor, she was not. But I must make a few conditions by your leave, Sir, before I proceed to give any farther particulars relative to this business. In the first place I must have your honor’s word that you will not ask who employed me, or who I live with, because I neither want to lose a good place, nor to betray
my

my mistress farther than is necessary: and in the next place, as I am a poor fellow who works hard for my bread, I hope your honor will not think me to blame for hoping you will reward me for the discovery I have it in my power to make."

"Well," cried Mr. Mennill, not a little agitated at the thoughts of having an opportunity at last of being revenged on poor Belinda for all the trouble she had cost him, "tell me first, are you certain she is not married to some worthless fellow or other, since in that case I shall leave her to follow her own devices."

"No

"No that she a'nt I'll take my oath," replied the postillion.

"Be ware how you venture to swear unless you are very certain," said Mr. Mennill, "that you are right."

"O I wish," replied he, "I was as sure of a good reward."

"And what sum now," cried Mr. Mennill, "should you look upon as such?"

"Why I hope your honor will not think ten guineas too much?"

"Pretty well, pretty well," replied he, "for being engaged in so infamous a business."

"But consider, please your worship,

ship, I am but a poor *sarvent*."

[*scratching his head*]

"True. And you are absolutely sure I shall find her where you left her?"

"Quite sure," said the informer.

"Well then I will give you the sum you ask on your own conditions; so let me have all the necessary information instantly."

This he gave in a very particular manner; and having pocketed his reward took his leave.

Mr. Mennill was now agitated with a thousand different emotions; rage and indignation however, were sorry to say, were predominant. At some moments he thought
giving

giving her to Maynard was too great a reward for her disobedience; but then again he considered that though he looked upon it in that light his daughter did not: on the contrary it was to shun being his she had taken this unpardonable step. What greater punishment then could he devise than compelling her to give him her hand. However severe she might think it, he was persuaded the world would acquit him. This reflection determined him at once. He ordered his carriage, and driving to his friend Sir John, gave him an account of the discovery he had so fortunately made. Charles

was

was present, and found as his hopes revived his passion began to revive also, and pressed for an immediate departure in search of his charming though cruel mistress.

They first however held a consultation on the subject of the compulsive measures they were determined to follow if possible. The plan had its difficulties they were but too sensible. The spirit she had already shewn convinced them they would not be easily conquered. Sir John promised to have a special licence in readiness against their return. He would prepare the clergyman to expect no very willing bride, and all that then remained
was

was for Mr. Mennill to convey her to church on the day they should appoint.

Having settled this important matter in the best manner they were able, the father of Belinda, with her unworthy lover, agreed to set off once more together; but in far better spirits than before, being now certain where to find her. As they had perfectly recovered the fatigue of their former peregrinations, they set off by six o'clock next morning, hoping to have her safe in Portland Place the same evening; the farm, as we have already said, being not more than thirty miles from London,

Charles,

Charles, as they advanced towards the place of Belinda's retreat, observed that it could not, by the road they were going, be far, he fancied, from his brother's seat. This surmise was confirmed the farther they went. It never occurred to either of them however that *he* could be any ways interested in the present business. He had seen her but once, they imagined; and thought it more than probable, however near she might now be to him, he might be totally ignorant of it, as *she* of course went there in order to be concealed from every one, and above all from a person so nearly connected

with the very man from whom she fled, supposing she found he lived so near Oak Farm. This circumstance therefore gave them no concern.

They drove on in high spirits, looking upon all their troubles as very near an end. But judge of their mutual astonishment on coming within an hundred yards of Thompson's house, when they beheld Belinda walking by the side of the identical Edmond, familiarly leaning on his arm, her hand tenderly pressed in his.

She instantly knew her father's carriage, saw him, saw the now more than ever detested Charles, and

and instantly shrieking with terror, fell lifeless into the arms of her adoring lover. What a scene of confusion was here; for a moment Mr. Mennill felt some symptoms of parental affection on seeing her in that state of insensibility; but it was for a moment only; he had from the first been prejudiced against Edmond, he believed him a mere pedant, a mere learned blockhead, without one grain of manly spirit in his whole composition, and consequently held him in sovereign contempt.

Charles knew him better, and to his unspeakable mortification be-

held in his happy brother a very formidable rival. He cursed him most fervently, and no less fervently wished him at old Nick.

While making these no very pleasant reflections they had left the carriage, and sprung forwards to receive their prey, meaning to convey her in the state she was in to the nearest inn, and there at their leisure use proper means to bring her to herself; but Edmond was in no humour to resign his lovely burthen, he clasped her to his breast, declaring no power on earth should force her from him.

“ May be so, young man,”
cried

cried Mr. Mennill, more than ever enraged at what he called his impertinent declaration, "we shall soon see who dares dispute the will of a justly incensed father."

While this altercation passed, Belinda faintly opened her eyes, and begging Edmond would disengage her from his encircling arms with a look that pierced him to the soul, she dropped on her knees to her father, unable to ask that forgiveness she so earnestly wished him to grant.

"And must I then lose you, my dear Belinda!" cried her amiable lover; "must I thus resign

the fond hopes I have been permitted to indulge?—oh Miss Men-
nill!”

“ Yes,” cried her father with fury in his eyes on finding *he* was the man who had occasioned all this trouble and confusion; for tho’ he could not clearly account for it, he now firmly believed Edmond and she had been longer acquainted than he knew of, and that it was on *his* account she had rejected Charles.

Charles was of the same opinion, and doubly enraged at being thus as he imagined imposed upon by a brother.

“ Yes, young man, be assured
those

those hopes are for ever at an end. For the friendship I bear your father, I forbear to reproach you as you deserve: take your last look of this undutiful girl, and take my word for it that the next time you meet, if ever you do, you shall find her the wife of your brother."

The lovers, now clasping their hands in silent agony, gazed on each other with unutterable tenderness. Charles cast a look of insulting triumph on Edmond, whose heart was too deeply interested in the fate of his lovely Belinda to pay any attention to it; he still hoped the hour would come when

he should triumph in his turn. Miss Mennill had assured him he alone possessed her tenderest affections, and tho' she had withstood all his fond solicitations to become his wife without her father's permission, which he had, with all the engaging eloquence he was master of, pressed her to do, yet she had solemnly vowed never to give her hand to another. With this sweet consolation, he was compelled to resign her for the present, finding all attempts to detain her must be in vain. Had he had Charles only to contend with, the case would have been different; but he could not
bring

Bring himself to violate the respect due to the father of her he loved more than life.

Persuaded they had now conquered, they ordered the door of the carriage to be opened. Belinda, oppressed as she was with this distressing event, yet found an opportunity to say in a whisper to her distracted lover—"do not yield to despair, my amiable Edmond; if I live I will yet be your's." He had only time to look his gratitude; she was now, more dead than alive, put into it, and without permitting her to take leave of her kind friends at the farm, away they

drove. 'Tis hard to say which of the two lovers were most wretched.

The impertinent raptures Charles attempted to assume highly disgusted poor Belinda. Her father's stern behaviour during the painful journey was but little calculated to afford her any consolation. His thoughts were deeply employed on the means necessary to be taken in order to get her fairly married, that he might be relieved from all farther trouble. He scarce opened his lips 'till they were set down at his own door. There Charles took his leave, putting on all the airs of an adoring lover; and 'tis certain he again thought her the love-
liest

liest, the most desirable creature he ever beheld, and was as passionately in love with her as it was in his nature to be with any of her sex. To every sentiment of delicacy he was an utter stranger: the aversion he could not but see she felt for him, therefore gave him no concern; he was clearly of opinion that aversion must at all events be the consequence of marriage, and its having the start of the ceremony he thought made mighty little difference.

He now returned to Sir John, exulting in his success, and looking upon both her and her fortune as his own.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XIV.

BELINDA was ordered to prepare for accompanying him to church on the third day after her return home. All resistance she found would be in vain; she determined then to comply; but when there, her last resource to declare freely to the clergyman that compulsion alone had brought her there, fully persuaded he durst not so far profane the sacred ceremony as to proceed

proceed after such a declaration. What the consequence might be she knew not; dreadful no doubt; but at least it would put an end to her father's present design, and things might take a more favorable turn; nay even Charles she hoped would after so public an affront, if he had a grain of spirit, reject her hand in his turn. Having thus made up her mind, she felt some degree of ease, and sitting down, wrote a particular account of all that happened, to her friend Lady Sedley, who, as we have said, set off for Windsor the day after she had conveyed Miss Mennill to
Oak

Oak Farm, and with whom she had corresponded constantly during her stay there. She also informed her ladyship of the resolution she had formed; nor was it a new idea, having frequently in the course of this business talked of putting that desperate plan in execution, should she, as she feared, be driven to extremities; she now also intreated her friend to ask Sir James's opinion of it, and if possible let her know what it was before the fatal moment arrived.

This, Lady Sedley did not fail to do; and, to Belinda's infinite satisfaction, she found he approved highly

highly of it, saying—"it *must* at least put off the evil hour, and in all human probability for ever."

Thus encouraged, she did her utmost to fortify her mind, and prepare it for the important trial she had to go through.

Mr. Mennill, tho' now well assured her affections were placed on another, yet believed she would make no farther resistance finding it could answer no purpose; he therefore began to lay aside some degree of his severity and felt he had not wholly lost the tenderness of a father.

The dreaded morning at length arrived: Sir John, his son, and a lady who was asked to be of the
the

the cruel party, were at Mr. Mennill's by ten o'clock. The poor trembling, agitated Belinda heard the sound of their carriage, and too well guessing who it was, had nearly fainted as she sat in her dressing room waiting for the horrid summons. Willson's officious attention and affected tenderness disgusted her; yet it saved her from swooning as she prevailed upon her to take a few drops.

Mr. Mennill, contrary to her hopes, came up himself to lead her down. She endeavoured to rise as he entered, but could not, so great was her agitation; she was almost breathless; she took
out

out her smelling bottle—she begged a glass of water. Never was a creature in so wretched a condition as poor Belinda; even her obdurate, her cruel father, felt some symptoms of remorse, but stifling them as well as he could, took her hand saying—“come, come, my dear daughter, it will soon be over, and you will be the happiest girl in England; come, let me lead you down.”

She now arose—“lead me, Sir, where you please,” cried she, tears, in spite of all her efforts to restrain them, falling down her pale cheek: “be quick, Sir, O let me not have time to think
—lead

—lead me to the carriage—spare me the horror of seeing the insensible wretch who has thus by his base endeavours contrived to steel my father's once affectionate heart against his child—let me not see him till there is an absolute necessity for it, lest my courage should forsake me.”

She followed him, scarce able to support her tottering frame. Her father *now* willing to indulge her, put her into his own carriage, and himself only getting into it with her, bid a servant tell Sir John and the rest of the company to follow.

They too soon reached the church
for

for Miss Mennill's peace—he led her in. The triumphant bridegroom, assuming an air of tenderness, took his place by her side. The clergyman began the solemn service, and had just got to the question—“ wilt thou have this woman to be thy wedded wife?”—to which Charles was bowing his assent, when a young lady stepped from one of the pews where she had been concealed, and coming forward with a timid air, to their utter astonishment and confusion cried, “ stop, Sir; he cannot give his hand to that lady ’till I am laid in my grave; behold in me the lawful, though

though much injured wife of the faithless, the perjured Charles Maynard,"

Miss Mennill in the greatest consternation, thought her an angel sent from heaven to save her from wretchedness. Joy and amazement had nearly produced the same effects that sorrow had done before. She staggered to the rails of the communion table, and leaning against them in order to support herself, stood in an almost lifeless state viewing a scene absolutely incomprehensible. Charles no sooner cast his eyes upon the (to him) most unwelcome intruder, than with a face pale as death he exclaimed,

“ heaven

“heaven and earth! what do I see?” then endeavouring to recover some little presence of mind, he added, “Woman, by what authority have you thus dared to——”

“Be calm, Mr. Maynard,” cried the stranger, interrupting him with a dignity in her manner which plainly testified she was no impostor, “do not attempt by affecting ignorance, to add to your guilt. ’Tis too late, Sir. Well do you know I can, and (you have only yourself to thank for it,) the hour is at last come in which I am determined to assert my right.” Then turning to Sir John, who stood petrified with horror, she continued

continued—"Yes, Sir, in me you behold the wife of that ungenerous, that unworthy son; and I trust, if you will deign to hear my unfortunate story, however much you may think me to blame, you will confess I am still more to be pitied."

"What am I to think of all this?" cried Sir John, darting a look of indignation on the evidently guilty Charles: speak Sir, instantly speak, and tell me without prevarication what you have done."

His son was silent.

"'Tis well, Sir;" continued Sir John, "that fullen silence tells but too plainly what I have to expect. Be gone! fly! never, never
presume

presume to appear again in my presence unless fully able to clear yourself from this horrid accusation."

Charles, the guilty Charles, had not courage to reply. The lady, basely as he had injured her, made an attempt to plead for him.

"If you wish to prove yourself the injured wife you pretend, madam," cried Sir John, interrupting her, "or have any desire that I should hear patiently what you have to say for yourself, plead not for a wretch you ought, if what you assert is true, to look upon with abhorrence. In justice I cannot refuse to hear you: take then *his* place in my carriage, which

which I must, till he is able to prove his innocence, think him unworthy to fill; and go home with me, that my painful curiosity may be immediately gratified." Then again turning to his son, "Go, Sir," said he; "you know the terms on which alone we can ever meet again."

To paint the situation of Mr. Mennill's mind during this wonderful scene, or that of his now happy daughter, is far beyond the power of my abilities. I must leave it to the imagination of my readers to conceive the various emotions they had both experienced. So violent were Sir John's still, that
he

he had almost forgot the purpose for which they were there assembled. Charles, like a guilty criminal, now quitted the church without having the courage to look one of the company in the face. This roused Sir John from the reverie he had fallen into. He turned to Mr. Mennill, but felt himself at a loss for expression. At last, "O my friend," cried he, "how have I been deceived! how ought we all to rejoice at that amiable creature's fortunate escape, [looking tenderly on Belinda] if what we have just heard is true. But true or not, I fear, yes I fear we have both been to blame. Can you, Miss Mennill,

generously pardon the too great part I have taken in thus distressing you? Can you, my dear young lady, in consideration of a father's partiality for a child he believed worthy even to possess so great a treasure as yourself, can you forgive the trouble and anxiety I have occasioned you? Gladly, most gladly, would I believe he is not guilty; yet alas appearances are too strongly against him to warrant my indulging this delightful hope."

"O Sir," cried the gentle-hearted Belinda, softened even to tears by this speech of Sir John's, "do not add to my distress by doubting it a moment. All I ask in return for the
favour

favour you deign to ask is, that you will intercede for me with my beloved father, prevail on him to restore me once more to the place in his affections I have so unfortunately lost, and be assured every past transaction shall on my part be forgot."

"Come to my arms, my dear girl," cried Mr. Mennill, "and let me press you to my heart. Belinda, my dear Belinda, I fear I have not been quite so good a father as you have deserved."

His enraptured daughter ran and fondly threw her arms about him, tears of joy streaming from her fine eyes, crying "O Sir, spare me, spare your poor girl! This is far

greater happiness than she is able to bear. Continue but to be thus kind, and your Belinda shall make it the study of her future life how to deserve it."

"I will do more," said her repentant father; "yes, I will do more; I will try to make an atonement for what is past, and of such a nature as I trust will be most acceptable to your heart, my dear girl. What it is I will inform my friend Sir John, whose approbation I shall find necessary before I can firmly promise it, as soon as we have gained some degree of tranquillity."

Belinda guessed what he meant, and could hardly conceal the pleasing

ing emotions which now filled her breast. A sweet smile of content and gratitude appeared on her expressive countenance, which plainer than any language could have done, spoke her thanks.

They now prepared to quit a place which had witnessed so unexpected a revolution in her affairs. She had a great curiosity to hear the lady's story, and feared it would not be gratified so soon as she wished. Sir John however intreated Mr. Men- nill and his daughter would indulge him with their company for the rest of the day, saying they no doubt wished, and certainly had a right to hear, what motives the lady then

present had for acting in the manner she had that morning done. To this they readily agreed; and having taken leave of the astonished clergyman, who I have not a doubt would gladly have been of the party, they drove to Sir John's; where having taken a dish of chocolate, and sat half an hour to give the lady time to recollect herself, she at their request began what she had to say in the following manner:

“ 'Tis now,” said she, addressing herself to Sir John, “ near two years since I first had—must I call it the misfortune—to see your son at a ball given after the races at Stamford. My

My father's name was Beverley. He was colonel of a regiment of dragoons, and of a family I need not blush to be descended from. You may possibly know them Sir: they have a considerable estate in that part of the country. He was a younger son, of course had but little fortune besides his commission. He married a woman of family also; but she had only merit and beauty to recommend her: this my father thought sufficient, though his did not. I was born in the first year of their marriage, and had the irreparable misfortune to lose my mother before I had attained my tenth year.

I was now put under the care of

H 4

an

an aunt of her's, who had from my infancy been tenderly attached to me. My worthy and most amiable father survived her only four years. All he could leave me was about five hundred pounds. I will not, Sir, trespass on your patience by unnecessary particulars. I had no friend now on whom I could depend but my aunt, who had indeed, as far as woman could do, supplied to me the loss of a mother. With her, I continued to live as happily as it was possible for one to do who had been thus at so early an age deprived of parents so justly dear to her.

At this ball your son was pleased to distinguish me by every possible
attention.

attention. He asked permission to visit me. My aunt on my account was flattered by it. Sorry am I to say I too soon found his views were such as I could not encourage. He was now forbid the house. I was shocked—I was mortified. Conscious that in my conduct he could have seen nothing on which to found those ungenerous hopes he presumed to entertain. My young heart too felt most severely the cruel disappointment; for he had by his insinuating, his engaging manners, gained but too great an interest in it. Yet sensible he no longer deserved the place he had held in it, I determined to see him no more.

“He now wrote to me every hour. I had the fortitude to return all his letters unopened. At last he addressed himself to my aunt: he offered to marry me; implored her mediation; assured her she should herself be witness to the ceremony: all he asked was that our union might be kept a secret till he could without hazard reveal it to his father. My aunt, whose declining health made her anxious for my fate, advised me to reflect seriously on his proposal. Alas! I was but too much inclined to obey. In short, we were married.

“I had given him my solemn promise to wait his time for declaring it: and though in less than six months

I had

I had the mortification to find he beheld me with cold indifference, and no doubt condemned himself for the step he had taken, yet so sacred did I hold the promise I had made him, that I never would have betrayed his secret had it not been with a view to save this lady from even a more wretched fate than my own.

“After the first six months of our unfortunate union, I rarely saw him; and but seldom had even the consolation of hearing from him; before the end of the year I was rendered compleatly miserable by the loss of my affectionate aunt.

“Having lost his faithless heart, my delicacy, my pride was such, that
I scorn'd

I scorned being indebted to him for any pecuniary favors. Small as my fortune was, I determined it should serve me.

“ I continued in the house where I had so many years resided, and your son, Sir, will I trust do me the justice to acknowledge, sustained my unhappy lot without a murmur; reproaches I well knew would only serve to exasperate him, to time alone I trusted for some happy change in my situation. What I suffered, I will not attempt to describe. I at last heard of his intended marriage with Miss Mennill; I also heard the lady was averse to it.

Belinda I

I there-

I therefore hoped it would not take place. I was informed by a friend of every step taken to accomplish it. I trembled for the amiable creature who was thus on the brink of ruin. My promise I no longer looked upon as binding; on the contrary I felt it was my indispensable duty to prevent it.

“ The resignation with which I had hitherto submitted to his cruel neglect, had no doubt persuaded him I had given over all thoughts of ever being acknowledged as his wife, and probably made me indifferent to his conduct; and he was in some measure

sure right: I had too long been fatally convinced I had nothing to hope for; nor should I have made any attempts to interrupt his pleasures, if such they can with propriety be called, had he not formed this unpardonable, this guilty plan. Self, I can with truth affirm, was with me out of the question. Well did I know, that by betraying as I have now done his important secret, I must lose every hope; but I had the heartfelt consolation to know that in doing it I acted as I ought.

“ This, Sir, is a very brief account of my unhappy situation,” said the lady; “ should any doubts remain

remain in your breast in regard to the certainty of my ill fated marriage, tis amply in my power, thank heaven, to remove them. I mean not to ask your intercession in my favor with the cruel author of all my woes; no, Sir, I now look upon him with more than indifference, not for worlds would I again put myself under the protection of a man my reason, my best judgment, compels me to despise. Forgive me, Sir John, this harsh expression; I have alas! but too much cause to make use of it, and permit me to add before I conclude, I neither expect nor desire any other favor from him, or any of his family, than

to

to stand acquitted of blame. The little I possess shall suffice to maintain me while an inhabitant of this world; long I trust that will not be; yet if it is the will of heaven that I am not so soon as I earnestly wish to be released from it, I will, as I have hitherto done, submit to its all wise decrees with what fortitude and resignation I am able."

Thus the amiable, and no less unfortunate Mrs. Maynard, as we must now call her, ended her story. Belinda was charmed not only with her appearance, but the spirited manner in which she had ended her little unfortunate narrative; she admired

mired her noble pride, and longed to be better acquainted with so young a creature, for she did not appear to be above eighteen years of age, who had conducted herself on so trying an occasion with so much propriety and great understanding.

She would now have taken her leave; but Sir John, who was no less prejudiced in her favour than Miss Mennill, kindly said he could not part with her so soon; he had still many questions to ask, many interesting things to say to her, as well as many things to settle; for tho' she with becoming pride had told him she expected nothing *from him*, she must give him permission
to

to act in this particular business as he might think proper. She was his daughter, and as such he must teach her obedience to his commands. This he said with so pleasing a smile that it was pretty plain to his friends he did not mean they should be very severe.

The rest of the day was passed as agreeable as could be expected after the event of the morning. Sir John did not once mention his son; of course no other person would do it. When the hour of parting arrived, Sir John would have ordered his carriage to set his daughter down, but Belinda begged he would permit her and her father to have that pleasure;

pleasure; this was agreed to, and they found she had from the time Charles's marriage had been first talked of, been with a friend of her's in Seymour-street, that she might be at hand to put her design of preventing it into execution. Here then they set her down, Belinda asking permission to call upon her the next day, which was granted with great pleasure; and Mr. Mennill now conveyed his daughter home, still Miss Mennill, with more real satisfaction than he could possibly have experienced had he succeeded in the purpose for which he left it.

The astonishment and sad disappointment of Mrs. Willson on seeing her
her

her young lady return unmarried,
I will pass over, only observing that
it was great; indeed all her hopes
of figuring in a higher line than
merely housekeeper vanished at once.

C H A P.

CHAPTER XV.

CHARLES Maynard, on leaving the church, found his mind in such a state of distraction that he, for a few moments, thought the wisest thing he could do in order to compose it was to shoot himself through the head. That he never could see his father on the terms offered, he well knew ; conscious that all the lady had asserted was strictly true, and that she not only could, but no doubt would clearly prove it to be so.

She

She had so long ceased giving him any trouble, or concerning herself about him, that he flattered himself she never would; his affairs were so deranged, his debts so much greater than he had any hopes of being able to discharge, that he had no resource but agreeing to the match proposed by his father. He endeavoured to persuade himself if he could but bring that business to a happy conclusion he could not only satisfy his creditors, but also his injured wife, by purchasing her silence. Her past resignation encouraged him to believe this would be attended with no great difficulty; but we have seen he mistook her character.

character. . . He was now convinced to his utter confusion he had, nor knew which way to turn himself. The idea of having recourse to a pistol had, while making some no very pleasant reflections, gradually evaporated; he considered that was in his power at any time, and it was too serious a business to be done in a hurry; yet I think I may venture to say, if not done in a hurry, it will be seldom done at all.

He now determined to try the efficacy of a letter to Sir John, which should contain a full confession of his guilt, of his penitence, and of his purpose to quit England immediately if he would be graciously
pleased

pleased to afford him the means of doing it.

He immediately sat down and wrote the letter which was to decide his fate; should the answer be unfavorable, he might then take the pistol scheme again into consideration, and indeed it appeared to him in that case the only remedy left.

Sir John was shocked beyond all expression on finding how grossly he had been deceived in the opinion he had formed of his favorite son, and began when too late to find a man of the world, a man of fashion and *bon ton*, was not quite so desirable a character as he had till now absurdly believed. The
amiable,

amiable, the accomplished Edmond now occurred to him, and he could not but confess it was likely to do him more credit than he had any reason to expect from the guilty Charles, were his repentance ever so sincere. In his first emotions he was tempted to throw his letter with just indignation into the fire without deigning to answer it, and leave him to his fate; however, on reflection, he took up his pen, and in few words told him he would, on condition he instantly left the kingdom, allow him enough; and perhaps, should his future conduct merit so great a favour, a little more than to save him from starving.

Charles on receiving it was again tempted to apply to his friend, the pistol. The word starving was the most unpleasant his eyes had ever encountered. He paused; he turned his thoughts on every side; and at last decided on going abroad; he should at least see the world, tho' he might not have it in his power fully to enjoy the pleasures of it. Some lucky circumstance might even render that possible; he might be fortunate at play: how many men had he known who figured in life with no other resource; hitherto 'tis true he had not been very successful, but fortune was fickle, she might give her wheel a turn in his favor.

He

He ordered a post chaise, and next morning set off for Dover, having received from his father his first quarter's allowance—a few days before it would have appeared a very trifling sum, scarce more than sufficient to serve him a tenth part of the time it was now destined for; but there was no help for it; in the first moment of Sir John's wrath it would have been a folly to expect a greater indulgence. Time he hoped would mitigate it, and the next remittance of course be more ample. He arrived in safety at Calais, and from thence set off for Paris, where, wishing him all the felicity he merits, let us leave him to do the best he can.

While Sir John was employed in settling the above most mortifying business, and Mr. Mennill considering in what manner he should best bring about a plan he had formed by which he meant to give Belinda an agreeable surprise, she was writing the following letter to her friend, Lady Sedley.

Oh my dear, dear friend, how shall I give you an idea of my present joy; words I am certain never can do it. Ah why are you not in town that you might have the pleasure of seeing me absolutely out of my wits. Never, never sure was there so strange, so unlooked for, so happy

happy a change as in the situation of your poor Belinda. But the means by which this delightful revolution was brought about—'tis this, my beloved Lady Sedley, I wish to relate, but how, or where to begin, I actually am still so compleatly astonished, I know not; let me however attempt it.

“ The miserable, the dreadful, and justly dreaded moment arrived, in which I was to be led to church, as my father believed, with less reluctance than he had any reason to expect. Ah little, very little, did he guess I was on the contrary determined when there to give him convincing proofs he was deceived.

Thank heaven, that trial was spared me; I had no occasion to put my desperate plan in execution, and now tremble at the bare thought, that it might possibly, if I had, not have saved me from the fate I feared.

“ I leave you, my dear friend, to imagine what were my feelings when led to the carriage by my father; I was more dead than alive; such a bride, so pale, so death like, sure never was seen. Well—the vile, infamous Charles, elate with hope, and triumphing in the mischief he had so nearly wrought, stuck himself up at your Belinda’s side, attempting to assume an air proper for the occasion. Horrid wretch!—

wretch!—little did any of us dream at that distracting moment it was not *his first appearance* in that character. The clergyman began the solemn service, I in terrors inconceivable listening to him lest I should miss the proper moment to put a stop to it. At last—"wilt thou have this woman to be thy wedded wife?" the creature was in the act of giving his consent, when out of one of the pews came a lovely young woman, and stepping forward, exclaimed—"hold, Sir: he cannot, shall not give that hand to any other than myself till I am laid in my silent grave; tis mine, lawfully mine."

“ Figure to yourself, my dear Lady Sedley, our unspeakable consternation; for my part, all I wonder at is that the joyful surprise did not kill me; indeed I was for some time almost lifeless, and hardly heard what passed from that highly important moment ’till that in which I found myself again in the carriage, my father tenderly supporting me, Sir John and the young creature I have mentioned seated on the opposite side. All to me appeared a dream; I durst hardly credit my senses; I looked timidly around, but finding the detested Charles was not with us, began to be enough composed to trust I was really awake.

“ We

“We were set down at Sir John’s; my father I found having agreed to spend the day with him, in order to talk over this strange affair, and for that purpose had also brought home the angel, as I had good reason to call her, who had thus saved me from despair and misery.

“When we had in some measure got over the surprise and acquired a tolerable degree of composure, the lady gave us the particulars of her unfortunate story; but those I shall reserve ’till we meet, and only tell my dear friend that she actually is, and has been his truly wretched wife near two years.

Judge what were poor Sir John’s

sensations on having this wonderful circumstance confirmed beyond all doubt; finding she had been blameless, and had behaved under her misfortunes with a prudence, a resignation, that few women I fear would have had the fortitude to do, Sir John, taking her tenderly by the hand, bid her be comforted, and from that moment look upon upon him as a father. She is of a good family, has lost both her parents; and at the time she became acquainted with the cruel wretch who has for ever destroyed her peace lived with an aunt.

“ Ah! what a fickle, what an insensible wretch he must indeed be
who

who could thus abandon so lovely, so amiable a creature; for she is truly so, my dear Lady Sedley, as I am sure you will confess when acquainted with her, which you will soon be I hope, for I must have your permission to introduce her when you come to town; and I am sure you will not let it be very long before you give me the joy of seeing you; for I have much, very much to say, many things to tell you, many more than I can crowd into a sheet or two of paper.—Ten thousand hopes—as many fears—O Lady Sedley, is it then in nature that Edmond may yet be mine! Was I to blame?—tell me freely. Yet surely I was not.

Could

Could I do less than make him a partaker in my present happiness? I every moment expect to receive an answer filled with the genuine effusions of his tender, his truly feeling heart. I now rejoice that my father is apprized of our mutual attachment: never, never shall I forget his astonishment when he so unexpectedly made the discovery, nor the guilty Charles's rage on finding a so justly favored rival in his brother. Heavens! with what contempt, what insulting triumph did he look upon him when they with so much cruelty tore me from his arms; but I trust he will soon triumph in his turn; yes soon, my dear friend; I
guess

guess so, from some kind words which my now truly affectionate father dropped on finding what a viper he had cherished in his bosom. Persuaded he has generously formed a design of this nature I shall leave the management of it wholly to himself; pretty certain I shall yet be most compleatly happy, I can patiently wait his time.

“ I have once since the memorable day of days seen my lovely deliverer, and, as I have already told you, find her a most amiable and deserving creature; 'tis our opinion, my father's and mine I mean, that Sir John intends inviting her to live with him; what indeed can he do better?

better? I am sure she has it in her power, by her various accomplishments, to render home more agreeable to him than he has by all accounts found it for some years; and I am certain it will be a pleasing study to her to make him sensible of the agreeable change. In spite of the shocking treatment she had met with, she yet wished to intercede with him in favour of his worthless son; but he stopped her at once, telling her he would patiently hear her on any subject except *that*; desiring it might never be touched upon unless he himself led to it. This was said in so decisive a manner that no reply could be made.

“My

“ My father tells me the creature is going abroad; 'tis the very best thing he can do; for as to a reconciliation with his wife, 'tis out of the question, even granting he wished it, which I have no reason to believe; but she I am certain would on no terms hear of it; and no wonder, my dear Lady Sedley, after the treatment she has so undeservedly met with.

“ I vow were he *full* brother to the engaging Edmond, I should have my fears; but he is not—they had different mothers. Ah! how very different are they themselves. Adieu! my beloved friend; I trust I shall have the pleasure of seeing you in a day or two.

“ Think

“ Think how doubly fortunate I was in having the dreadful ceremony interrupted, without my intentions of doing it as I had proposed being discovered ; by this happy event my father remains ignorant of my premeditated disobedience.

“ Before I conclude this letter permit me to return you my hearty thanks for those excellent books you have sent me ; but in a more particular manner for the four following ones, Lord Winworth, or the Memoirs of an Heir, Edward and Harriet, or the Happy Recovery, Sophia, or the Embarrassed Wife, and Pleasing Variety, containing six new novels ; for as your ladyship

very

very justly observes, that for humor, delicacy, and sentiment, they far exceed any publications that have appeared for many years, and I sincerely join in wishing the publisher (who I find lives in Duke's Court, St. Martin's Lane) every success so valuable a collection deserves, and think they ought to be read by every family in the kingdom.

“ And now, my dear Lady Sedley, once more adieu! My best respects to Sir James, and believe me my dear Lady Sedley's ever affectionate

BELINDA MENNILL.

P.S. How

P. S. How Sir James and your ladyship are to get out of the scrape you got into by giving my father so pleasant a ramble, heaven knows. Should he ever discover, I mean, that it was all a contrivance of your's; yet I now think he is in so good a humour, so delighted to reflect on my hair's breadth escape, that I absolutely believe he would laugh heartily at it; but we will talk the matter over when we meet."

Edmond's sensations, while reading the few lines sent him by his adored Belinda may be more easily imagined than described; they were those of a lover; a thousand times
he

he pressed the paper to his lips, a thousand times he read over the delightful, the astonishing contents.

She had ordered him to have patience—to take no step towards seeing her till he heard from her again; this he was tempted to pronounce cruel, but checked himself, for well he knew his lovely Belinda was incapable of it. He endeavoured to obey without murmuring; how long he might have done so is uncertain, but to his infinite joy, the trial of his forbearance and resignation was not so long as he feared it would have been. A letter from the father of his beloved, set his agitated heart at rest, if one
may

may pronounce a heart at rest which the contents of it had thrown into the most violent emotions of joy. That my readers may with more ease be able to decide the question, I will transcribe Mr. Mennill's letter for their perusal.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XVI.

TO EDMOND MAYNARD, ESQ.

MY eyes are opened—the first use I wish to make of them is to see you in Portland Place; at our last meeting I was blind—let that be my apology for not being able to distinguish a rascal from a man of worth. If you, Edmond, are that man which a *friend of your's* has taken some pains to persuade me you are, set off without loss

loss of time; strange things have happened. Your father and I have hitherto acted like a pair of old fools; we have seen our error, and that too before tis too late, which does not always happen to be the case.

Not a line from you to the friend above mentioned; mind I forbid that; I wish to give her a surprise; agreeable as I believe it will be, do not however flatter yourself it can equal that she last met with. Set off instantly, and depend upon a welcome reception from

Your's,

EDWARD MENNILL.

If

If excess of joy could kill, Edmond must have died; he did not, therefore we have proved the assertion, that such have occasionally been its effects, false.

His carriage was at the door in less than an hour after he had received the transporting summons, and by three o'clock set him down at Mr. Mennill's door.

Belinda was at that moment sitting in the drawing room with her father; he was reading a newspaper, the *Lord Winworth*, or the *Memoirs of an Heir*. A servant entered, announcing Mr. Edmond Maynard, who instantly followed. Belinda, starting, threw down her book, and

and was on the point of flying towards him, but checked herself, and turned her eyes on her father in order to see by his looks what reception her lover was likely to meet with, believing he had disobeyed her commands, and come un-
sent for.

Mr. Mennill guessed the cause of her embarrassment, and smiling cried —“ why, Belinda, is this the kindest welcome you have to bestow on a friend of mine?”

“ Oh, my dear Sir,” said his daughter, “ how good, how——”

“ Come, come, no more of this; let me see if you have yet *learned obedience?*” When taking the de-
lighted

lighted Edmond by the hand, and leading him to his daughter, he added—"prove to me that you *have* by receiving this young man as the person I have made choice of for your husband—let me have no whimpering, huffy, no tears," continued he, in the same agreeable tone, "for I will be obeyed."

Edmond now took her unwilling hand and pressed it to his lips, with an expression in his fine eyes which plainly told both father and daughter he thought himself the most fortunate and happiest of men.

"Oh, Sir," cried the blushing Belinda, "how shall I ever repay

such unbounded kindness, how thank you as I wish for this proof of your affection?"

"Why, my dear girl, the only way I can point out to you for that purpose," replied he, "is, I think, to forget I ever was less so."

Just at this happy moment, Sir John Maynard's coach stopped at the door. His surprise on finding Edmond already there, for he knew Mr. Mennill intended sending for him, but did not imagine it would have been quite so soon, was nearly as great as Belinda's.

All was now harmony and heart-felt satisfaction. The day was passed in a manner infinitely more
pleasing

pleasing to the two fathers than any they had passed for many years, perhaps in their lives.

Lady Sedley and Sir James came to town next day; her ladyship went immediately to call upon her now happy friend. Their meeting was affectionately tender. After a thousand kind congratulations on the unexpected change in Belinda's affairs—"but, my dear girl," said Lady Sedley, "what shall I say to your father, how make my peace with him, should he find out the wicked trick I played him? I absolutely have not courage to see him, lest his first question should be to ask me for my neighbours.

the *Selbys*; I shall die if he does, that's certain, and I fear 'tis no less certain he will. Yet after all, my dear Miss Mennill, I did not press ~~him~~ to gallop off to Scarborough, Harrowgate, York, and the Lord knows where, *that* was his own doings."

"Indeed, indeed," cried Miss Mennill, "your ladyship is in a woeful scrape; thank heaven one party concerned is no longer to be feared, he is otherwise disposed of."

"Well but do tell me," said her ladyship eagerly, "what shall I say, how shall I contrive to get out of it with a tolerable grace? upon my life I dread our meeting."

Scarce

Scarce had she uttered these words when to her confusion Mr. Mennill entered the room.

“I fear I interrupt your tete a tete,” said he, smiling. “Belinda I suppose, has been telling your ladyship she has conquered, and is in a fair way to have her own way at last, in spite of all the trouble I have taken to prevent it. I confess she is a sly gypsey, and has led her poor father a pretty dance. By the bye I have to thank your ladyship for part of it. A fine wildgoose chase you sent me to. I must have a long reckoning with you and Sir James about that confounded business. There did I gallop two or three hun-

dred miles after your neighbours the Selbys, but never could I overtake them. No great matter indeed, as you now know I suppose; for Sophy I find never even heard of them till I told her of my rambles; who the devil was it that told you she was with them? you see it was all a lie."

"Will you promise, my dear Sir, to forgive me if I tell you the whole truth?" cried Lady Sedley, laying her hand upon his shoulder, and looking up in his face with a most bewitching smile.

"Hey day!" replied he, "what am I to guess by this sly preface? Have you too, as well as herself, had a hand in the plot?"

"Not

“Not a word till you promise to forgive me,” answered her ladyship.

“I am not obliged to confess, you know, my good friend, but I own I long to unburthen my conscience.”

“So, so,” cried Mr. Mennill, no wonder my girl had courage to dispute my authority, since she had the sanction of a person whom she is silly enough to look upon as a pattern of every perfection. Come out with it,” continued he; “down upon your knees; let me have all the truth and nothing but the truth, and trust to my mercy. Thank your stars I am not in the humour at present to be absolutely inflexible.”

“No wonder my dear Sir,”

said her ladyship, "our Belinda never heard of the Selbys; for the fact is I am by no means certain any such family ever existed."

"Not exist!" said he in amaze; why they lived next door to you I thought."

Ah, Sir," cried she.

"Come, come, I will not humble you too far," continued he smiling, since I find by that *ah Sir*, you show some signs of true penitence. Well, and so you have the face to tell me that pretty story was all a hum, have you?"

"I have indeed," replied Lady Sedley, affecting to dread his resentment.

"And

“And you actually knew nothing about my daughter at that time?” said he.

“O yes,” replied she, “full well I knew every thing about her; for instead of the Selbys, it was I myself who conveyed her away.”

“You did?” cried Mr. Mennill.
“Mighty well. Pray proceed; no stop: prithee before you go any farther tell me did that rascal Charles Maynard, or did he not, see her at your house as he affirmed.”

“He did indeed,” replied she.

“What the very night before, as he declared?”

“Yes, exactly so.”

“She was with you at the time we called then, was she?”

“O no; she was by that time, my dear Sir, on the very spot where you found her.”

“Why how the devil can that be?” cried he; just now you told me you yourself conveyed her away; take care, or you’ll make a bungling story of it.”

“Not at all, my dear Sir, if you will only encourage the poor culprit to proceed by a gracious smile now and then during her recital.”

“Why with what a pair of pretty plotting gypsies have I had to deal all this time,” said he. “Well, go on.”

“Sir

“ Sir James was the identical person your late favourite Charles——”

“ O confound him !” exclaimed Mr. Mennill.

“ He, I say,” continued Lady Sedley, was the very person who was attacked by footpads ; and so Sir, as Charles came to his relief, he could not do less than ask him in that he might thank him at leisure for the favor ; and there Sir, to his most agreeable surprise, he found your daughter and me sitting quietly, chatting, little expecting so unwelcome a guest. After this we concluded Wimpole street was no longer a place of safety. I ordered my post chaise, whipped into it with the dear girl, set

set her down at my honest friend Thompson's, and instantly returned to town in order to have the honor to receive your visit the next day; which I made no doubt I should be favored with in consequence of the intelligence the amiable Charles would hardly fail to give you. This, Sir, is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, &c." and down she dropped on her knee at his feet in a supplicating attitude.

He could not withstand this; but raising her, laughed heartily at the contrivance, crying "why what a bugbear of a fellow must I be?"

"Pardon me there," cried her ladyship: 'twas not you, my dear Sir,
from

from whom we' fled, but your vile companion."

"Thank you," said he, "thank you for that happy turn. So I am to forgive you both am I?"

"If you please," cried the ladies, each taking a hand, curtsying, and smiling in his face.

"Well, if I must, I must," cried Mr. Mennill; "but I had a cursed jaunt of it for all that."

"Nay I vow," cried Lady Sedley, "I deserve a handsome fee for that prescription; it has done you a world of good, has n't it, my dear Belinda? Did you ever see Mr. Mennill look so well?"

"And

“And you prescribed it merely for the benefit of my health,” said he, “did you,” [an arch look.]

After chatting a while in this agreeable manner, Lady Sedley took her leave; having first promised Sir James and herself would dine with them the next day, on condition Edmond should be of the party, as she was impatient to be introduced to him. Belinda begged she would come some hours before dinner, as she wanted to go a shopping, and had many things to say to her.

Sir John Maynard, his son Edmond, and poor Mrs. Maynard,
met

met Sir James and Lady Sedley at Mr. Mennill's the following day about five o'clock. The only bar to their happiness was a recollection of past scenes; however nothing was said by any of them likely to damp the pleasure of the party; even the unfortunate wife endeavoured to forget her sorrows, and by an amiable cheerfulness contribute all she could to promote it.

"What a divine fellow!" whispered Lady Sedley to Belinda when Edmond entered the room. "I never beheld so fine a figure; is it possible he can be as insensible of it as you would persuade me?"

"Wait till the day is over, replied

plied her happy friend, "then tell me whether you have any remaining doubts?"

After dinner the ladies retired to the drawing room, where they were soon followed by the gentlemen, and various plans were formed for the evening.

"Pray my good friend," said Lady Sedley, where can we be happier than we are in this very room? do not let us, like too many of the world, give up the substance for the shadow."

So saying, she went to the harpsichord, desiring Belinda would sing her favorite song. This she did without pressing or affecting to
have

have a violent cold. Edmond, the delighted Edmond also took a part, they soon formed an agreeable though unpremeditated concert, and unanimously agreed Lady Sedley was right."

Before they parted, Sir John taking his daughter Belinda's hand, said, "you have from the moment I entered the house so agreeably engaged my attention my lovely girl, that I had very near left it without mentioning my chief motive for paying my respects to you, perhaps Edmond may not have been quite so negligent."

"Pray, said the blushing Belinda," what can it be? sure I am, I find nothing

thing to accuse you of. Sir John Maynard I fancy is not apt to be wanting in every proper attention.

“ And yet I certainly have on this occasion,” “ replied he smiling, for I have not yet asked when you will do me the honour to be of a party I proposed making to St. George’s Church.”

“ Oh not St. George’s, exclaimed poor Belinda involuntarily recollecting the scene which had so lately passed there.”

“Very well my dear girl, cried Sir John, it shall not be there then. you have no other objection I trust, and so my good friends,” continued he smiling, “ I invite you all to breakfast with me on Tuesday next,
from

from thence we will go to the first church we meet with, have a little chat with the clergyman, and return to dinner."

"Heavens Sir John, on Tuesday next, what do you mean."

"O my meaning, I give you my honor my dear Miss Mennell is perfectly innocent; all I propose is to make you the happiest wife in England, that's all; now I'll be judged by this company, whether they can reasonably offer any objections to my plan."

They all smiled.

"*I do*, cryed Lady Sedly, yes, I positively do object;" you now truly fancy you are to have every thing
your

your own way. Belinda is wholly under my command, nor dare she murmur at any I do her the honor to lay upon her; I repeat, it *shall not* be Tuesday, but, looking sweetly on her agitated friend, but—Wednesday. They shant have all their own way, shall they my dear girl?"

Edmond now took her ladyship's hand and pressing it to his lips, *looked* his gratitude."

Belinda cried, "how can you my dear friend talk in that unthinking manner, upon my word I did not expect?"

"To follow my example *quite* so soon, I presume you were going to say

say my dear, said Lady Sedly, smiling, but pray what have I to do with your expectations? on Wednesday then," continued she turning to Sir John, "you may depend upon our being with you by ten o'clock. So good night—leave me to settle the business with this silly girl."

Edmond again pressed her hand with looks of gratitude, then turning to Belinda—"may I, my amiable Miss Mennill, flatter myself that I shall not owe my felicity wholly to the arbitrary commands of my charming advocate?"

"Indeed I hardly know a word you have been saying," replied she
with

with a most engaging smile; you are a teizing set of beings; however when I have leisure I will consider how far you are obliged to my saucy friend who presumes thus to tyrannize over me; if you do not find me of the party on Wednesday; you have only to conclude her boasted authority is not quite so great as she is pleased to suppose."

He took her unreluctant hand, pressed it to his heart, and gazing on her with unspeakable tenderness, followed his father, who, repeating the invitation, took his leave. Sir James and Lady Sedley soon did so likewise, the latter promising

ming to be with her friend early in the morning.

She kept her word. The appointed day at length arrived.

I might now, my fair readers, treat you with a thousand particulars; such as, how the lovely girl looked, how she was dressed, of her palpitations, her emotions, &c. but trust all these kind of matters have on similar occasions been so amply described by other historians, that you will readily forgive me if I spare both you and myself that trouble. Suffice it to say, that she was led to church in the character of Miss Mennill, and returned from
it

it in that of Mrs. Maynard, fully persuaded there was not a happier woman than herself in the three kingdoms.

FINIS.

4 DE 58

9

W

